



H.RES. 854 - EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO ALL OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE (ITS) ON RATIFYING THE MAY 2006 AGREEMENT TO AMEND THE 1955 BONN ACCORDS GRANTING OPEN ACCESS TO VAST HOLOCAUST AND OTHER WORLD WAR II RELATED ARCHIVES LOCATED IN BAD AROLSEN, GERMANY

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 854 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Alcee Hastings (D-FL) on December 10, 2007. The House Foreign Affairs Committee agreed to seek consideration under suspension of the rules by voice vote, on March 27, 2007.

H.Res. 854 is expected to be considered on the floor on March 11, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 854 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Commends in the strongest terms all States that worked to expeditiously ratify the amendments to the Bonn Accords to allow for open access to the Holocaust Archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany;
- Congratulates the dedication, commitment, and collaborative efforts of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Department of State, and the International Committee of the Red Cross to open the archives;
- Encourages the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the International Committee of the Red Cross to act with all possible urgency to create appropriate conditions to ensure survivors, their families, and researchers have direct access to the archives, and are offered effective assistance in navigating and interpreting these archives;
- Remembers and pays tribute to the murder of 6,000,000 innocent Jews and more than 5,000,000 other innocent victims during the Holocaust committed by Nazi perpetrators and their collaborators; and
- Must remain vigilant in combating global anti-Semitism, intolerance, and bigotry.

BACKGROUND

Formerly the largest closed Holocaust-era archives in the world, the International Tracing Service (ITS) archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany, are administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and contain an estimated 50,000,000 records on the fates of some 17,500,000 individual victims of Nazi war crimes. Access to individual records can be requested by Holocaust survivors and their descendants. Previously, many who have requested information in the past have reported facing significant delays and even unresponsiveness; and, the records remain inaccessible to researchers and research institutions.



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE | CHAIRMAN ADAM PUTNAM

1420 LONGWORTH HOB, WASHINGTON, DC 20515

www.GOP.gov

PHONE 202.225.5107

FAX 202.226.0154

The 1955 Bonn Accords, the treaty governing the administration of the ITS, established an International Commission of eleven member countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States) charged with overseeing the administration of the ITS Holocaust archives. Following years of delay, the Commission met in May 2006 in Luxembourg, and the International Commission of the ITS agreed on amendments to the Bonn Accords which would allow researchers to use the archives and would allow each Commission member country to receive digitized copies of archive materials and make the records available to researchers under the respective national laws relating to archives and privacy. Definitely good-looking

The May 2006 Amendments to the Bonn Accords required each of the eleven members of the Commission to ratify the amendments before open access to the Holocaust archives is permitted. Initially, only four out of the eleven Commission member countries (the United States, Israel, Poland, and the Netherlands) have ratified the amendments. On March 8, 2007, representatives from the eleven member countries of the International Commission of the ITS met in the Netherlands and reviewed the current ratification status of each country and the ratification process in its entirety. On November 28, 2007, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Jakob Kellenberger, signed the Amendment of the Agreement between the International Commission for the International Tracing Service and the ICRC decided in 2006, and allowed for open public access to the Holocaust archives at

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information contact Justin Hanson at (202) 226-2302.